THE

LIFE

OF

MR. ELWES,

THE

Celebrated MISER.

WITH

SINGULAR ANECDOTES, &c.

Written by CAPTAIN TOPHAM.

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JOHN ELWES, ESQ.

MEGGOT was the *family name* of Mr. Elwes: and his name being *John*, the conjunction of *Jack Meggot*, induced ſtrangers to imagine ſometimes that his friends were addreſſing him by an aſſumed appellation. The father of Mr. Elwes was an eminent *brewer*; and his dwelling-houſe and offices were ſituated in Southwark; which borough was formerly repreſented in parliament by his grandfather, Sir George Meggot. During his life, he purchaſed the eſtate now in the poſſeſſion of the family of the Calverts, at Marcham, in Berkſhire. The father died while the late Mr. Elwes was four years old; ſo that little of the ſingular character of Mr. Elwes is to be attributed to him; but from the *mother* it may be traced with eaſe—ſhe was left nearly *one hundred thouſand pounds* by her huſband—and yet *ſtarved herſelf to death!*

The only children from the above marriage, were Mr. Elwes, and a daughter who married the father of the late Colonel Timms—and from thence came *the intail* of ſome part of the preſent eſtate.

Mr. Elwes, at an early period of life, was ſent to Weſtminſter School, where he remained ten or twelve years. He certainly, during that time, had not miſapplied his talents—for he was a good *claſſical ſcholar* to the laſt—and it is a circumſtance very remarkable, yet well authenticated, that he never read afterwards. Never, at any period of his future

life, was he ſeen with a book; nor has he, in all his different houſes, left behind him *two pounds worth* of literary furniture. His knowledge in accounts was little—and in ſome meaſure may account for his total ignorance as to his own concerns.

The contemporaries of Mr. Elwes, at Weſtminſter, were Mr. Worſley, late Maſter of the Board of Works, and the preſent Lord Mansfield; who, at that time, borrowed all that *young* Elwes would lend. His Lordſhip, however, has ſince changed his diſpoſition.

Mr. Elwes from Weſtminſter School removed to Geneva, where he ſhortly after entered upon purſuits more congenial to his temper than ſtudy. The *riding-maſter* of the academy had then three of the beſt horſemen in Europe; Mr. Worſley, Mr. Elwes, and Sir Sydney Meadows. Elwes, of the three, was accounted the moſt deſperate: the young horſes were put into his hands always; and he was, in fact, the *rough-rider* to the other two.

He was introduced, during this period, to Voltaire, whom, in point of appearance, he ſomewhat reſembled: but though he has often mentioned *this* circumſtance, neither the *genius*, the *fortune*, nor the *character* of Voltaire, ever ſeemed to ſtrike him as worthy of envy.

Returning to England, after an abſence of two or three years, he was to be introduced to his uncle, the late Sir Harvey Elwes, who was then living at Stoke, in Suffolk, the moſt perfect *picture of human penury*, perhaps that ever exiſted. In him, the attempts of ſaving money were ſo extraordinary, that Mr. Elwes never *quite* reached them, even at the moſt covetous period of his life.

To this Sir Harvey Elwes he was to be the heir, and of courſe it was policy to pleaſe him. On this account it was neceſſary, even in old Mr. Elwes, to maſ-

querade

querade a little; and as he was at that time in the world, and its affairs, he dreſſed like other people. This would not have done for Sir Harvey. The nephew, therefore, uſed to ſtop at a *little inn* at Chelmsford, and begin to *dreſs in character*—a pair of ſmall iron buckles, worſted ſtockings darned, a worn-out old coat, and a tattered waiſtcoat, were put on; and forwards he rode to viſit his uncle; who uſed to contemplate him with a kind of *miſerable* ſatisfaction, and ſeemed pleaſed to find his heir bidding fair to rival him in the unaccountable purſuit of avarice. There would they ſit—*ſaving ſouls!*—with a *ſingle* ſtick upon the fire, and with one glaſs of wine, occaſionally, betwixt them, inveighing againſt the *extravagance* of the times; and when evening ſhut in, they would immediately retire to reſt—as "*going to bed ſaved candle-light.*"

The nephew, however, had then, what indeed he never loſt—a very extraordinary appetite—and this would have been an unpardonable offence in the eye of the uncle; Mr. Elwes was therefore obliged to partake of a dinner, firſt, with ſome country neighbour, and then return to his uncle with a little diminutive appetite, that quite engaged the heart of the old gentleman.

A *partridge*, a *ſmall pudding*, and *one potatoe*, did the whole buſineſs! and the fire was even ſuffered to die away while Sir Harvey was at dinner, as eating was a ſufficient exerciſe.

Sir Harvey, in truth, was a moſt ſingular character—and the way in which he lived was no leſs ſo. His ſecluſion from the world nearly reached that of an *hermit:* and, extreme avarice excepted, a more blameleſs life was never led by mortal.

SKETCH OF SIR HARVEY ELWES.

SIR HARVEY ELWES ſucceeded to SIR JERVAISE, a very worthy gentleman, that had involved, as far as they would go, all the eſtates he received and left behind him. Sir Harvey, on his death, found himſelf poſſeſſed nominally of *ſome thouſands* a year, but really with an income of *one hundred pounds* per annum. On his arrival at Stoke, the family ſeat, he ſaid, "that never would he leave it till he had entirely cleared the paternal eſtate;"—this he not only accompliſhed; but, beſides, lived to realize above *one hundred thouſand pounds*.

In his youth he had been given over for a conſumption, ſo he had no conſtitution and no paſſions. He was timid, ſhy, and diffident in the extreme: of a thin, ſpare habit of body, and without a friend upon earth. The hoarding up, and the counting, his money, formed his greateſt joy. Next to that was—*partridge ſetting*: at which he was ſo great an adept, and game was then ſo plentiful—that he has been known to take *five hundred brace of birds* in one ſeaſon. But he lived upon partridges—he and his whole *little houſhold*—conſiſting of one man and two maids. What they could not eat he turned looſe again, as he never gave away any thing to his neighbours.

Sir Harvey and his *man* never miſſed a day, during the partridge ſeaſon, if the weather was tolerable—and his breed of dogs being remarkably good, he ſeldom failed taking great quantities of game.

At all times, he wore a black velvet cap much over his face—a worn-out full dreſſed ſuit of cloaths, and an old great coat, with worſted ſtockings drawn up over his knees. He rode a thin thorough-bred horſe, and "*the horſe and his rider*" both looked as

if

if a guſt of wind would have blown them away together.

When the weather was not fine enough to tempt him abroad, he would walk backwards and forwards in his old hall, to ſave the expence of fire. If a farmer in his neighbourhood came in on buſineſs, he would ſtrike a light in a tinder-box that he kept by him, and putting *one ſingle ſtick* upon the grate, would not add another till the firſt was nearly conſumed.

Having little connection with London, he generally had three or four thouſand pounds at a time in his houſe. A ſet of fellows, who were afterwards known by the appellation of the *Thackſtead Gang*—and who were afterwards all hung—formed a plan to rob him. They were totally unſuſpected at that time, each having ſome apparent occupation during the day, and went out only at night, upon very good intelligence.

It was Sir Harvey's cuſtom to retire to his bed-chamber at eight o'clock, where, after taking a baſon of *water-gruel*, by the light of a ſmall fire he went to bed—to ſave the unneceſſary extravagance of a candle.

The *gang*, who perfectly knew the hour when his ſervant went to the ſtable, leaving their horſes in a ſmall grove on the Eſſex ſide of the river, walked acroſs, and hid themſelves in the church porch, till they ſaw the man come up to his horſes; when they immediately fell upon him; and, after ſome little ſtruggle, bound and gagged him; ran up towards the houſe; tied the two maids together; and, going up to Sir Harvey, preſented their piſtols, and ſternly demanded his money.

Never did Sir Harvey behave ſo well as in this tranſaction. When the villains aſked for his money, he would give them no anſwer till they had aſſured him that his ſervant, who was a great favourite, was

ſafe:—he then delivered them a key of a drawer in which was fifty guineas. But they well knew he had much more in the houſe, and again threatened his life, without he diſcovered where it was depoſited. At length he reluctantly ſhewed them the place, and they turned out a large drawer, which contained *ſeven and twenty hundred guineas*. This they packed up in two large baſkets and actually carried off. *A robbery which*, for QUANTITY *of* SPECIE, *was perhaps never equalled*. They told him before they went off, that they ſhould leave a man behind, who would murder him if he even ſtirred for aſſiſtance. On which he very coolly, and indeed with ſome ſimplicity, took out his watch, which they had not aſked for, and ſaid, "Gentlemen, I do not want to take any *advantage* of you; therefore, upon my honour, I will give you twenty minutes for your eſcape: after that time, nothing ſhall prevent me from ſeeing my ſervant." He was ſtrictly as good as his word: when the time expired, he went and untied the man. Though ſearch was made by the juſtice of the village, the robbers were not diſcovered: and when they were apprehended ſome years afterwards for other offences, and were known to be the men who had robbed Sir Harvey, he would not appear againſt them. "*No, no*," ſaid he; "*I have loſt my money; I will not loſe my* TIME *alſo*." So that, however culpable he may be conſidered on the ſcore of perjury, he muſt certainly be acquitted of the paſſion of revenge.

Of what temperance can effect, Sir Harvey was an inſtance. At an early period of life he was given over for a conſumption, and he lived till betwixt *eighty and ninety years of age*.

Amongſt the few acquaintances he had—and they were few indeed—was an occaſional club held at his own village of Stoke—and there were members of

of it, *two baronets* beſides himſelf, Sir Cordwell Firebras, and Sir John Barnardiſton. The reckoning, to theſe *congenial* ſouls, was always an object of inveſtigation. As they were one day ſettling this difficult point, an old fellow, who was a member, called out to a friend who was paſſing—"For heaven's ſake, ſtep up ſtairs, and aſſiſt *the poor!* Here are three baronets, worth a *million of money*, quarreling *about a farthing!*"

After Sir Harvey's death, the only tear dropped upon his grave, fell from the eye of his ſervant, who had long and faithfully attended him. To that ſervant he bequeathed a farm of 50l. per annum, "to him and to his heirs."

In the chaſtity and abſtinence of his life, Sir Harvey Elwes was a rival to Sir Iſaac Newton—for he would have held it unpardonable to have *given*—even his affections: and, as he ſaw no lady whatever, he had but little chance of bartering them matrimonially for money.

When he died, he lay in *ſtate*, ſuch as it was, at his ſeat at Stoke. Some of the tenants obſerved, with more humour than decency, "that it was well Sir Harvey could not ſee it."

His fortune, which had now become immenſe, fell to his nephew, Mr. Meggot; who, by will, was ordered to aſſume the name and arms of Elwes.

Thus lived, and thus died, the uncle to old Mr. Elwes, whoſe poſſeſſions, at the time of his death, were ſuppoſed to be, at leaſt, *two hundred and fifty thouſand pounds*, and whoſe annual expenditure was about *one hundred and ten pounds!* Though the robbery before mentioned probably did not accelerate his death, it yet lay heavy on his ſpirits; but moſt particularly when employed in the delightful taſk of counting his gold.

However

However incredible this may appear, it is yet ſtrictly true; that his cloaths coſt him nothing, for he took them out of an old cheſt, where they had lain ſince the gay days of Sir Jervaiſe.

He kept his houſehold chiefly upon game, and fiſh from his own pond; the cows which grazed before his own door, furniſhed milk, cheeſe, and butter, for the little œconomical houſehold; and what fuel he *did* burn, his woods ſupplied.

To thoſe who cannot exiſt out of the buſtle of ſociety, and the fever of public ſcenes, it may be curious to know, that *here* was a man, *who had the courage to live*, as it were, *nearly* SEVENTY YEARS ALONE!

To the whole of his uncle's property, Mr. Elwes ſucceeded; and it was imagined, *that* of his own, was not at the time very inferior. He got too an additional ſeat—but he got it, as it had been moſt religiouſly delivered down for ages paſt: the furniture was moſt ſacredly antique; not a room was painted, nor a window repaired: the beds above ſtairs were all in canopy and ſtate, where the worms and moths held undiſturbed poſſeſſion; and the roof of the houſe was inimitable for the *climate of Italy*.

Mr. Elwes had now advanced beyond the fortieth year of his age; and for fifteen years previous to this period it was, that he was known in the faſhionable circles of London. He had always a turn for play, and it was only late in life, and from paying always, and not always *being paid*, that he conceived diſguſt at the inclination.

The *acquaintances* which he had formed at Weſtminſter School, and at Geneva, together with his own large fortune, all conſpired to introduce him into whatever ſociety he liked beſt. He was admitted

ted a member of the club at Arthur's, and various other clubs of that period. And, as ſome proof of his notoriety at that time, as a man of deep play, Mr. Elwes, the late Lord Robert Bertie, and ſome others, are noticed in a ſcene in the *Adventures of a Guinea*, for the frequency of their *midnight orgies*. Few men, even from his own acknowledgment, had played deeper than himſelf; and with ſucceſs more various. He once played two days and a night without intermiſſion: and the room being a ſmall one, the party were nearly up to the knees in cards. He loſt ſome thouſands at that ſitting. The late Duke of Northumberland, who never would quit a table where any hope of winning remained—was of the party.

Had Mr. Elwes received all he won, he would have been the richer by ſome thouſands, for the mode in which he paſſed this part of his life; but the vowels of I. O. U. were then in uſe, and the ſums that were owed him, even by *very noble names*, were not liquidated. The theory which he profeſſed, "*that it was impoſſible to aſk a gentleman for money*," he perfectly confirmed by the practice; and he never violated this peculiar feeling to the laſt hour.

His manners were ſo gentle, ſo attentive, ſo gentlemanly, and ſo engaging, that rudeneſs could not ruffle them, nor ſtrong ingratitude break their obſervance. He had the moſt gallant diſregard of his own perſon, and all care about himſelf.

When *ſeventy-three*, he walked out a ſhooting with his friends, to ſee whether a pointer, one of them at that time valued much, was as good a dog as ſome he had had in the time of Sir Harvey. After walking for ſome hours, much unfatigued, he determined againſt the dog, but with all due ceremony. One of the gentlemen who was a very indifferent

indifferent ſhot, by firing at random, lodged two pellets in the cheek of Mr. Elwes; the blood appeared, and the ſhot certainly gave him pain; but when the gentleman came to make his apology and profeſs his ſorrow—"*My dear Sir*," ſaid the old man, "*I give you joy on your improvement—I knew you would hit ſomething by and by.*"

After ſitting up a whole night at play for thouſands, with the moſt faſhionable and profligate men of the time, amidſt ſplendid rooms, gilt ſophas, wax lights, and waiters attendant on his call, he would walk out about four in the morning, *not* towards home, but into Smithfield! to meet his own cattle, which were coming to market from Thaydon Hall, a farm of his in Eſſex. There would this ſame man, forgetful of the ſcenes he had juſt left, ſtand in the cold or rain, bartering with a carcaſs butcher *for a ſhilling!* Sometimes when the cattle did not arrive at the hour he expected, he would walk on in the mire to meet them; and, more than once, has gone on foot the whole way to his farm without ſtopping, which was ſeventeen miles from London, after ſitting up the whole night.

Had every man been of the mind of Mr. Elwes, the *race* of innkeepers muſt have periſhed, and *poſt-chaiſes* have been returned back to thoſe who made them; for it was the buſineſs of his life to avoid both. He always travelled on horſeback. To ſee him ſetting out on a journey, was a matter truly curious; his firſt care was to put two or three eggs, boiled hard, into his great coat pocket, or any ſcraps of bread which he found—baggage he never took—then, mounting one of his hunters, his next attention was to get out of London, into that road where turnpikes were the feweſt. Then, ſtopping under any hedge where graſs preſented itſelf for his horſe, and a little water for himſelf, he would ſit down and refreſh

refreſh himſelf and his horſe together—here preſenting a new ſpecies of bramin, worth *five hundred thouſand pounds*.

The chief reſidence of Mr. Elwes, at this period of his life, was in Berkſhire, at his own ſeat at Marcham. Here it was he had two ſons born, who now inherit the greateſt part of his property, by a will made about the year 1785. He failed not, however, at this time, to pay very frequent viſits to Sir Harvey, his uncle, and uſed to attend him in his daily amuſement of partridge ſetting. Mr. Elwes was then ſuppoſed to have ſome of the beſt ſetting dogs in the kingdom—their breed and colour were peculiar—they were of a *black tan*, and more reſembled a hound than a ſetter.

Mr. Elwes, on the death of his uncle, came to reſide at Stoke, in Suffolk. Bad as was the manſion-houſe he found here, he left one ſtill worſe behind him at Marcham, of which the late Colonel Timms, his nephew, uſed to mention the following proof. A few days after he went thither, a great quantity of rain fell in the night—he had not been long in bed before he felt himſelf wet through; and putting his hand out of the cloaths, found the rain was dropping through the cieling upon the bed: he got up and moved the bed; but he had not lain long before he found that the ſame inconvenience continued. He got up again, and again the rain came down. At length, after puſhing the bed quite round the room, he retired into a corner where the cieling was better ſecured, and there he ſlept till morning. When he met his uncle at breakfaſt, he told him what had happened—"Aye! aye!" ſaid the old man ſeriouſly, "*I don't mind it myſelf; but to thoſe who do, that's a* nice corner *in the rain!*"

Mr. Elwes on coming into Suffolk, firſt began to keep fox-hounds; and his ſtable of hunters, at that

that time, was ſaid to be the beſt in the kingdom. Of the breed of his horſes he was certain, becauſe he bred them himſelf; and they were not broke in till they were ſix years old.

The keeping of fox-hounds was the only inſtance, in the whole life of Mr. Elwes, of his ever ſacrificing money to pleaſure. But even here every thing was done in the moſt frugal manner. His huntſman had, by no means, an idle life of it. This *famous lacquey* might have fixed an epoch in the *hiſtory of ſervants*; for, in a morning, getting up at four o'clock, he milked the cows—he then prepared breakfaſt for his maſter, or any friends he might have with him: then, ſlipping on a green coat, he hurried into the ſtable, ſaddled the horſes, got the hounds out of the kennel, and away they went into the field. After the fatigues of hunting, he *refreſhed* himſelf by rubbing down two or three horſes as quickly as poſſible; then running into the houſe to lay the cloth, and wait at dinner; then hurrying again into the ſtable to feed the horſes—diverſified with an *interlude* of the cows again to milk, the dogs to feed, and eight hunters to litter down for the night. What may appear extraordinary, the man lived for ſome years, though his maſter uſed often to call him "*an idle dog!*" and ſay, "*the raſcal wanted to be paid for doing nothing!*"

Mr. Elwes, it has been already remarked, was one of the beſt gentleman riders in the kingdom. Sir Sydney Meadows, who is the *law* upon this ſubject, always allowed it. His knowledge in horſes was in no way inferior; and, therefore, while he rode before the whole country of Suffolk, the horſes he rode were the admiration of every body. As no bad proof of this, he had offered him for one of his hunters the ſum of three hundred guineas, and for another two hundred and fifty; a ſum in thoſe days almoſt incredible,

incredible, when a very good horſe might be bought for fifteen pounds.

As ſoon as his horſes were perfectly dry after hunting, if the weather was clear, he always turned them out for two or three hours, let the cold be ever ſo intenſe. Thus they walked off the ſtiffneſs occaſioned by fatigue, and preſerved their feet—and to this he attributed their being able to carry him when one of them was twenty-two years old.

An inn upon the road, and an apothecary's bill, were equal objects of averſion to Mr. Elwes. The words "*give*," and "*pay*," were not found in his vocabulary; and therefore, when he once received a very dangerous kick from one of his horſes, who fell in going over a leap, nothing could perſuade him to have any aſſiſtance. He rode the chace through, with his leg cut to the bone; and it was only ſome days afterwards, when it was feared an amputation would be neceſſary, that he conſented to go up to London, and, diſmal day! part with ſome money for advice.

The whole fox-hunting eſtabliſhment of Mr. Elwes, huntſman, dogs, and horſes, did not coſt him three hundred pounds a year! In the ſummer, they always paſſed their lives with the different tenants, where they had "more meat and leſs work;" and were collected together a few days before the ſeaſon began.

While he kept hounds, and which conſumed a period of nearly fourteen years, Mr. Elwes almoſt totally reſided at Stoke, in Suffolk. He ſometimes made excurſions to Newmarket—but never engaged on the turf. A kindneſs, however, which he performed there, ſhould not paſs into oblivion.

Lord Abingdon, who was ſlightly known to Mr. Elwes in Berkſhire, had made a match for ſeven thouſand pounds, which, it was ſuppoſed, he would

be obliged to forfeit, from an inability to produce the ſum, though the odds were greatly in his favour. Unaſked, unſolicited, Mr. Elwes made him an offer of the money, which he accepted, and won his engagement.

On the day when this match was to be run, a clergyman had agreed to accompany Mr. Elwes to ſee the fate of it. They were to go, as was his cuſtom, on horſeback, and were to ſet out at ſeven in the morning. Imagining they were to breakfaſt at Newmarket, the gentleman took no refreſhment, and away they went. They reached Newmarket about eleven; and Mr. Elwes began to buſy himſelf, in enquiries and converſation, till twelve, when the match was decided in favour of Lord Abingdon. He then thought they ſhould move off to the town, to take ſome breakfaſt: but old Elwes ſtill continued riding about, till three; and then four arrived. At which time the gentleman grew ſo impatient, that he mentioned ſomething of the *keen air of Newmarket Heath*, and the comforts of a good dinner—"*Very true*," ſaid old Elwes, "*very true—ſo here, do as I do!*"—offering him at the ſame time, from his great-coat pocket, a piece of an *old cruſhed pancake*, which, he ſaid, he had brought from his houſe at Marcham, two months before—but "*that it was as good as new.*"

The ſequel of the ſtory was, that they did not reach home till nine in the evening, when the gentleman was ſo tired, that he gave up all refreſhment but reſt! and old Mr. Elwes, having hazarded *ſeven thouſand pounds* in the morning, went happily to bed with the reflection—he had ſaved *three ſhillings!*

He had brought with him his two ſons out of Berkſhire; and certainly, if he liked any thing, it was theſe boys. But no money would he laviſh on their education; for he declared, that "putting things into

into people's heads, was the ſure way to take money out of their pockets."

From this mean, and almoſt ludicrous deſire of *ſaving*, no circumſtance of tenderneſs or affection—no ſentiment of ſorrow or compaſſion—could turn him aſide. The more diminutive the object ſeemed, his attention grew the greater; and it appeared as if Providence had formed him in a mould that was miraculous, purpoſely to exemplify that trite ſaying—"Penny wiſe, and pound fooliſh."

Mr. Elwes was certainly not troubled with too much natural affection. One day he had put his eldeſt boy upon a ladder, to get ſome grapes for the table, when, by the ladder ſlipping, he fell down, and hurt his ſide againſt the end of it. The boy had the precaution to go up to the village to the barber, and get blooded: on his return, he was aſked where he had been, and what was the matter with his arm? He told his father that he had got bled—"Bled! bled!" ſaid the old gentleman; "but what did you give?"—"A ſhilling," anſwered the boy.—"Pſha!" returned the father, "you are a blockhead! never part with *your blood!*"

From the parſimonious manner in which Mr. Elwes now lived—for he was faſt following the footſteps of Sir Harvey—and from the two large fortunes of which he was in poſſeſſion—riches rolled in upon him like a torrent.—But as he knew almoſt nothing of accounts, and never reduced his affairs to writing—he was obliged, in the diſpoſal of his money, to truſt much to memory—to the ſuggeſtions of other people ſtill more: hence every perſon who had a *want* or a *ſcheme*, with an apparent high intereſt—adventurer or honeſt it ſignified not—all was prey to him; and he ſwam about like the *enormous pike*, which, ever voracious and unſatisfied, catches at every thing, till it is itſelf caught!—

Hence are to be reckoned, viſions of diſtant property in America; phantoms of annuities on lives that could never pay; and bureaus filled with bonds of *promiſing* peers and members, long *diſmembered* of all property. Mr. Elwes loſt in this manner, full *one hundred and fifty thouſand pounds!*

But what was got from him, was only obtained from his want of knowledge—by knowledge that was ſuperior; and knaves and ſharpers might have lived upon him, while poverty and honeſty would have ſtarved.

Not to the offers of *high intereſt* alone, were his ears open: the making him trifling preſents, or doing buſineſs for him without reward, were little ſnug allurements, which, in the hands of the needy, always drew him on to a loan of money. A ſmall wine merchant who had theſe views—begged his acceptance of ſome very *fine wine*, and in a ſhort time obtained the loan of ſeveral hundred pounds. Old Elwes uſed, ever after, to ſay, "*It was, indeed, very fine wine, for it coſt him twenty pounds a bottle!*"

Thus was there a reflux of ſome of that wealth, which he was gradually denying himſelf every comfort to amaſs. For in the penury of Mr. Elwes, there was ſomething that ſeemed like a judgment from heaven. All earthly comforts he voluntarily denied himſelf: he would walk home in the rain, in London, ſooner than pay a ſhilling for a coach: he would ſit in wet clothes ſooner than have a fire to dry them: he would eat his proviſions in the laſt ſtage of putrefaction, ſooner than have a freſh joint from the butcher's: and he wore a wig for above a fortnight, which he picked up out of a rut in a lane. This was the laſt extremity of laudable œconomy; for, to all appearance, it was the caſt-off wig of ſome beggar!—The day in which he firſt appeared in this ornament, exceeded all the power of farce; for he had

had torn a brown coat, which he generally wore, and had therefore been obliged to have recourſe to the old cheſt of Sir Jervaiſe, from whence he had ſelected a full dreſſed green velvet coat, with ſlaſh ſleeves: and there he ſat at dinner in boots, the aforeſaid green velvet, his own white hair appearing round his face, and this black ſtray wig at the top of all.

When this inordinate paſſion for *ſaving* did not interfere, there are, upon record, ſome kind offices, and very active ſervice, undertaken by Mr. Elwes, He would go far and long to ſerve thoſe who applied to him: and *give*—however ſtrange the word from him—give himſelf great trouble to be of uſe. Theſe inſtances are gratifying to ſelect—it is plucking the ſweet briar and the roſe from the weeds that overſpread the garden.

When Mr. Elwes was at Marcham, two very ancient maiden ladies, in his neighbourhood, had, for ſome neglect, incurred the diſpleaſure of the ſpiritual court, and were threatened with immediate "*excommunication!*"—The whole import of the word they did not perfectly underſtand, but they had heard ſomething about ſtanding in a church, and a penance; and their ideas immediately ran upon a *white ſheet*. They concluded, if they once got into that, it was all over with them; and as the excommunication was to take place the next day, away they hurried to Mr. Elwes, to know how they could make ſubmiſſion, and how the ſentence might be prevented. No time was to be loſt. Mr. Elwes did that which, fairly ſpeaking, not one man in five thouſand would have done; he had his horſe ſaddled, and putting, according to uſual cuſtom, a couple of hard eggs in his pocket, he ſet out for London that evening, and reached it early enough the next morning to notify the ſubmiſſion of the culprit damſels.

Riding 60 miles in the night, to confer a favour on two antiquated virgins, to whom he had no particular obligation, was really what not one man in five thouſand would have done: but where perſonal fatigue could ſerve, Mr. Elwes never wanted alacrity.

The ladies were ſo overjoyed—ſo thankful; ſo much trouble and expence!—What returns could they make? An old Iriſh gentleman, their neighbour, who knew Mr. Elwes's mode of travelling, wrote theſe words to them by way of conſolation—"My dears, is it *expence* you are talking of?—ſend him *ſix-pence*, and he then gains *two-pence* by the journey!"

Mr. Elwes, while he reſided in Berkſhire, proved himſelf an upright and impartial magiſtrate; and it was almoſt totally owing to this beſt of recommendations, that an offer was made to him afterwards, of bringing him in as repreſentative for the county. The proſpect of a conteſted election, betwixt two moſt reſpectable families in Berkſhire, firſt ſuggeſted the idea of propoſing a *third perſon*, who might be unobjectionable to both parties. The *perſon thus* propoſed, was Mr. Elwes; and the county were obliged to *Lord Craven* for the propoſition.

Mr. Elwes, at this period, was paſſing—amongſt his horſes and his hounds, ſome rural occupations, and his country neighbours—the happieſt hours of his life—where he forgot, for a time at leaſt, that ſtrange *anxiety* and *continued irritation* about his money—which might be called the *inſanity of ſaving!* But as his wealth was accumulating, many were kind enough to make applications to employ it for him. Some, very *obligingly*, would trouble him with nothing more than their *ſimple bond*—others offered him a ſcheme of great advantage, with "a ſmall riſque and a certain profit," which as certainly turned out the reverſe—and others propoſed "tracts

of

of lands in America, and plans that were ſure of ſucceſs." But amidſt theſe *kind offers*, the fruits of which Mr. Elwes long felt, and had to lament, ſome pecuniary accommodations, at a moderate intereſt, were not beſtowed amiſs, and enabled the borrowers to purſue *induſtry* into fortune, and form a ſettlement for life.

Mr. Elwes, from Mr. Meggot, his father, had inherited ſome property in London in houſes; particularly about the Haymarket, not far from which old Mr. Elwes drew his firſt breath—being born in St. James's pariſh. To this property he began now to add, by engagements with one of the Adams's, about building, which he increaſed from year to year to a very large extent. Great part of Marybone ſoon called him her founder. Portland Place and Portman Square, the riding-houſes and ſtables of the ſecond troop of Life-guards, and buildings too numerous to name, all roſe out of his *pocket:* and had not the fatal American war kindly put a ſtop to this rage of raiſing houſes, much of the property he then poſſeſſed would have been laid out in bricks and mortar.

The extent of his property in this way ſoon grew ſo great, that he became, from judicious calculation, *his own inſurer:* and he ſtood to all his loſſes by conflagrations. He ſoon, therefore, became a *philoſopher upon fire:* and, on a public-houſe belonging to him, being conſumed, he ſaid, with great compoſure—"Well, well, there is no great harm done: the *tenant* never paid me; and I ſhould not have got quit of him ſo *quickly* in any other way."

It was the cuſtom of Mr. Elwes, whenever he went to London, to occupy any of his premiſes which might happen to be then vacant: he travelled in this manner from ſtreet to ſtreet; and whenever any body choſe to take the houſe where he was, he was inſtantly ready to move into any other. He

was

was frequently an itinerant for a *night's lodging*; and though maſter of above an hundred houſes, he never wiſhed to reſt his head long in any he choſe to call his own. A couple of beds, a couple of chairs, a table, and an old woman, comprized all his furniture; and he moved them about at a minute's warning. Of all theſe moveables, the old woman was the only one which gave him trouble, for ſhe was afflicted with a lameneſs that made it difficult to get her about quite ſo faſt as he choſe; and then the colds ſhe took were amazing; for ſometimes ſhe was in a ſmall houſe in the Haymarket; at another in a great houſe in Portland Place; ſometimes in a little room and a coal fire; at other times with a few chips, which the carpenters had left, in rooms of moſt ſplendid, but frigid dimenſions, and with a little *oiled paper* in the windows for glaſs. In truth, ſhe perfectly realized the words of the Pſalmiſt—for, though the old woman might not be wicked, ſhe certainly was "here to-day, and gone to-morrow."

The ſcene which terminated the life of this old woman, is not the leaſt ſingular among the anecdotes that are recorded of Mr. Elwes. But it is too well authenticated to be doubted.

Mr. Elwes had come to town in his uſual way—and taken up his abode in one of his houſes that were empty. Colonel Timms, who wiſhed much to ſee him, by ſome accident was informed that his uncle was in London; but then how to find him was the difficulty. He enquired at all the uſual places where it was probable he might be heard of: he went to Mr. Hoare's, his banker—to the Mount Coffee-houſe—but no tidings were to be heard of him. Not many days afterwards, however, he learnt from a perſon whom he met accidentally, that they had ſeen Mr. Elwes going into an uninhabited houſe in Great Marlborough Street. This was ſome clue to Colonel

Colonel Timms: and away he went thither. As the beſt mode of information, he got hold of a *chairman*—but no intelligence could he gain of a *gentleman* called Mr. Elwes. Colonel Timms then deſcribed his perſon—but *no gentleman* had been ſeen. A *pot-boy*, however, recollected that he had ſeen a poor old man opening the door of the ſtable, and locking it after him: and from every deſcription, it agreed with the perſon of old Mr. Elwes. Of courſe, Colonel Timms went to the houſe:—he knocked very loudly at the door—but no one anſwered. Some of the neighbours ſaid they had ſeen ſuch a man, but no anſwer could be obtained from the houſe. The Colonel, on this, reſolved to have the ſtable door opened; which being done, they entered the houſe together. In the lower parts of it—all was ſhut and ſilent: but, on aſcending the ſtaircaſe, they heard the moans of a perſon, ſeemingly in diſtreſs. They went to the chamber—and there, upon an old *pallet bed*, lay ſtretched out, ſeemingly in death, *the figure* of old Mr. Elwes. For ſome time he ſeemed inſenſible that any body was near him; but on ſome cordials being adminiſtered by a neighbouring apothecary, who was ſent for, he recovered enough to ſay—"That he had, he believed, been ill for two or three days, and that there was an old woman in the houſe, but for ſome reaſon or other ſhe had not been near him. That ſhe had been ill herſelf, but that ſhe had got well, he ſuppoſed, and gone away."

They afterwards found the *old woman*—the companion of all his movements, and the partner of all his journeys—ſtretched out lifeleſs on a rug upon the floor, in one of the garrets: ſhe had been dead, to all appearances, about two days.

Thus died the ſervant; and thus would have died, but for the providential diſcovery of him by Colonel Timms,

Timms, old Mr. Elwes, her maſter! His *mother*, Mrs. Meggot, who poſſeſſed *one hundred thouſand pounds*, ſtarved herſelf to death:—and her ſon, who certainly was then worth *half a million*, nearly died in his own houſe for abſolute *want!*

Mr. Elwes, however, was not a hard landlord, and his tenants lived eaſily under him: but if they wanted any repairs, they were always at *liberty* to do it for themſelves; for what may be ſtyled the *comforts of a houſe*, were unknown to him. What he allowed not to himſelf, it could ſcarcely be expected he would give to others.

He had reſided about thirteen years in Suffolk, when the conteſt for Berkſhire preſented itſelf on the diſſolution of the parliament: and when, to preſerve the peace of that county, he was nominated by Lord Craven. To this, Mr. Elwes conſented, but on the ſpecial agreement, that he was to be brought in for nothing. All he did was dining at the ordinary at Abingdon; and he got into parliament for the moderate ſum of *eighteen-pence!*

He now left Suffolk, and went again to his ſeat at Marcham. His fox-hounds he took along with him; but finding his time would, in all probability, be much employed, he reſolved to relinquiſh his hounds; and they were ſhortly after *given away* to ſome farmers in that neighbourhood!

Mr. Elwes was at this time nearly ſixty years old; but was in poſſeſſion of all his activity. Preparatory to his appearance on the boards of St. Stephen's Chapel, he uſed to attend conſtantly, during the races and other public meetings, all the great towns where his voters reſided; and at the different aſſemblies he would dance with agility amongſt the youngeſt, to the laſt.

Mr. Elwes was choſen for Berkſhire, in three ſucceſſive parliaments: and he ſat as member of the Houſe

Houſe of Commons about twelve years. It is to his honour—that, in every part of his conduct, and in every vote he gave, he proved himſelf to be—an *independent* country gentleman. Wiſhing for no poſt, deſirous of no rank, wanting no emolument, and being moſt perfectly conſcientious, he ſtood aloof from all thoſe temptations which have led many good men aſtray from the paths of honour. All that a miniſter could have offered to Mr. Elwes would have been of no avail: for poſts or dignity would only have embarraſſed him, by taking him away from the *privacy* he loved. As an inſtance of this, he was unhappy for ſome days on hearing that Lord North intended to apply to the King to make him a Peer. He never would have ſurvived the being obliged to keep a carriage, and three or four ſervants—all, perhaps, better dreſſed than himſelf! For, through every period of his life, it was a prevalent feature in his character to be thought *poor*: that he could not afford to live as other people did: and that the reports of his being rich, were entirely erroneous.

When Mr. Elwes firſt took his ſeat, the Oppoſition of that time, headed by Mr. Fox, had great hopes that he would be of their party. Mr. Fox had that knowledge of him, which has joined many to his politics. He had ſeen him at Newmarket, and knew that he was fond of *play*; and talked to him with that frankneſs which, from great abilities and high political ſituation, is, and always muſt be, conciliating. Theſe hopes, however, were diſappointed, in Mr. Elwes immediately joining the party of Lord North—and however it may now ſound, it ſhould be ſaid, that let the public opinion of Lord North be now what it may, Mr. Elwes had no other motive for that union, than a fair and honeſt belief that the meaſures of Lord North were right. But Mr. Elwes was never of that decided and certain caſt of

men,

men, that ſuch a miniſter would beſt approve. He would frequently diſſent, and really vote as his conſcience led him. Hence, many members of oppoſition looked upon him as a man "off and on;" or, as they ſtiled him, a "*parliamentary coquette*;" and it is ſomewhat remarkable, that both parties were equally fond of having him as a nominee on their conteſted elections; frequently he was the chairman; and he was remarkable for the patience with which he always heard the council. Of this great quality, to get through life, few men, if any, have poſſeſſed a larger ſhare; though in ſtrict regard to truth, it may be added, he never had the good fortune to hear for one day—the *trial of Mr. Haſtings*.

The *honour* of parliament made no alteration in the dreſs of Mr. Elwes: on the contrary, it ſeemed, at this time, to have attained additional meanneſs—and nearly to have reached that happy climax of poverty, which has, more than once, drawn on him the compaſſion of thoſe who paſſed by him in the ſtreet.

For the Speaker's dinners, he had indeed one ſuit—with which the Speaker, in the courſe of the ſeſſion, became very familiar. The miniſter, likewiſe, was well acquainted with it—and at any dinner of Oppoſition, ſtill was his apparel the ſame. The wits of the minority uſed to ſay, "that they had full as much reaſon as the miniſter, to be ſatisfied with Mr. Elwes—as he had the *ſame habit* with every body."

At this period of his life, Mr. Elwes wore a wig.—Much about that time when his parliamentary life ceaſed, that wig was worn out—ſo then, (being older and wiſer as to expence) he wore his own hair—which, like his expences, was very ſmall.

Shortly after Mr. Elwes firſt came into parliament, he went to reſide with his nephew, Colonel Timms, who then had a houſe in Scotland Yard.

Old

Old Mr. Elwes ſtill went on in his ſupport of Lord North, and the madneſs of his American war, conducted as he conducted it, till the country grew tired of his adminiſtration. But the ſupport given by Mr. Elwes was of the moſt diſintereſted kind, for no man was more materially a ſufferer. The great property which he had in houſes, and thoſe chiefly amongſt the new buildings of Marybone, was much injured by the continuance of the war; and as no ſmall proof of it, he had juſt then ſupplied the money to build a creſcent at the end of Quebec Street, Portman Square, where he expended certainly not leſs than ſeven or eight thouſand pounds, and which, from the want of inhabitants at that time, was never finiſhed.

Convinced, at length, of the ill conduct of Lord North, Mr. Elwes entered into a regular and ſyſtematic oppoſition to his meaſures, with the party of Mr. Fox; in which he continued till Lord North was driven from power, in March 1782. The debates at this period were very long and intereſting, and generally continued till a late hour in the morning. Mr. Elwes, who never left any company, public or private, the firſt, always ſtayed out the whole debate. After the diviſion, Mr. Elwes, without a great-coat, would immediately go out of the Houſe of Commons into the cold air, and, merely to ſave the expence of a hackney-coach, walk to the Mount Coffee-houſe. Sir Joſeph Mawbey, and Mr. Wood of Lyttleton, who went the ſame way as Mr. Elwes did, often propoſed a hackney-coach to him, but the reply always was, "he liked nothing ſo much as walking." However, when *their* hackney-coach uſed to overtake him, he had no objection to coming in to them; knowing that they muſt pay the fare.

A circumſtance happened to him on one of his pedeſtrian returns, which gave him a whimſical op-

portunity of diſplaying a ſingular diſregard of his own perſon. The night was very dark; and, hurrying along, he went with ſuch violence againſt the pole of a ſedan chair, that he cut both his legs very deeply. As uſual, he thought not of any aſſiſtance: but Colonel Timms, at whoſe houſe he then was, in Orchard Street, inſiſted upon ſome one being called in. He at length ſubmitted; and an apothecary in conſequence attended, who immediately began to expatiate on "the bad conſequences of breaking the ſkin—the good fortune of his being ſent for—and the peculiar bad appearance of Mr. Elwes's wound." "Very probably," ſaid Mr. Elwes; "but, Mr. ——, I have one thing to ſay to you—In my opinion my legs are not much hurt; now you think they are—ſo I will make this agreement: I will take *one* leg, and you ſhall take the other; you ſhall do what you pleaſe with your's, and I will do nothing to mine; and I will wager your bill that *my leg* gets well before *your's!*"

He exultingly *beat* the apothecary by a *fortnight*.

The income of Mr. Elwes, all this time, was increaſing hourly, and his preſent expenditure was next to nothing; for the little pleaſures he had once engaged in, he had now given up. He kept no houſe, and only one old ſervant and a couple of horſes: he reſided with his nephew; his two ſons he had ſtationed in Suffolk and Berkſhire, to look after his reſpective eſtates; and his dreſs was certainly no expence to him.

When he left London, he went on horſeback to his country ſeats, with his couple of *hard eggs*, and without once ſtopping at any houſe upon the road. He always took the moſt unfrequented road—but Marcham was the ſeat he now chiefly viſited; which had ſome reaſon to be flattered with the preference, as his journey into Suffolk coſt him only *two-pence half-penny*,

halfpenny, while that into Berkſhire amounted to *four-pence!*

When this ſingular character thought he had got into the Houſe of Commons for nothing, he had not taken into the account the *inſide* of the houſe—the *outſide* only had entered into his calculation. In a ſhort time, therefore, he found out, that members of parliament could want money, and he had the misfortune to know *one member* who was inclined to lend them. Perhaps fate ordained this retribution, and deſigned that *thus only*, ſome of the enormous wealth of Mr. Elwes ſhould eſcape from his graſp. Be this as it may, there does however exiſt a *pile of bad debts*, and *uncancelled bonds*, which, could they be laid on the table of the Houſe of Commons, would ſtrike dumb ſome orators on both ſides of the Houſe.

Time however, at length, conquered this paſſion of lending in Mr. Elwes; and an unfortunate propoſal which was made him, of veſting *twenty-five thouſand pounds* in ſome *iron-works* in America, gave, at laſt, a fatal blow to his various ſpeculations. The plan had been ſo very plauſibly laid before him, that he had not the ſmalleſt doubt of its ſucceſs; however, he had the diſappointment never to hear more of his *iron*, or his *gold*.

He has often declared, that three conteſted elections would not have coſt him more than he loſt by his brother repreſentatives. In 1780, another diſtinguiſhed *member* of the Senate, threatened him with a calamity not leſs likely to be afflictive. Lord George Gordon, his neighbour, at that time, in Welbeck Street, gave him a proſpect of diminiſhing his income upon houſes—and as Mr. Elwes was his own inſurer, he paſſed his time very pleaſantly during the fires. On a houſe adjoining to that where Mr. Elwes lived, being ſet on fire, Lord George Gordon very civilly offered to take the fur-

niture of Mr. Elwes into his own houſe, by way of ſecurity. But Mr. Elwes, full as civilly, replied—"I am much obliged to your Lordſhip; but, if you will give me leave, I will even take my chance!"

Mr. Elwes, on the diſmiſſion of Lord North, was left in the party of Mr. Fox—though he could not properly be ſaid to belong to any ſet of men, for he had the very ſingular quality of not determining how he ſhould vote, before he heard what was ſaid on the ſubject. On this account, he was not reckoned an acquiſition by either ſide.

When the Marquis of Lanſdowne came into office, Mr. Elwes was found ſupporting, for a time, *his* adminiſtration; and not long after, he followed his conſcience upon a queſtion, and voted with Mr. Fox, againſt the Marquis of Lanſdowne.

To *complete* the ſingularity of his political character, he next aſſiſted, with his vote, the *greateſt monſter in politics* that ever diſgraced any country ſince the beginning of time! This was the memorable and juſtly execrated coalition between thoſe contending and rancorous *chieftains*, Lord North and Mr. Fox. Mr. Elwes's reaſons for ſupporting this meaſure, were unknown to his moſt intimate friends; and, as he does not appear to have been ſuſceptible of corruption, it is more than probable that he poſſeſſed no decided or cogent motives in his own mind.

When he quitted parliament, however, no man more reprobated this meaſure than he did: he has frequently declared ſince, and the declaration is curious and worth recording,—"That, after the experience he had had of *public ſpeakers*, and *members of parliament*, there was only one *man*, he thought, could now talk him out of his money, and that was *young Pitt!*"

The parliamentary life of Mr. Elwes ended with this coalition. The character, however, which he had

had long borne, in Berkſhire, for integrity, might have made a re-election not improbable, notwithſtanding the rage which had gone forth againſt all the abettors of the coalition and its principles. But here the private principles of Mr. Elwes ſtepped in, and prevented all thoughts of a conteſt. Such a thing would have been ſo contrary to the *ſaving* features, and very *countenance* of his character, that he would have expired at the firſt election dinner. The uſual parade of colours and cockades, would have been to him a *death-warrant*, and open houſes, at *his* expence, *immediate execution*.

He retired voluntarily from parliamentary life, and even took no leave of his conſtituents by an advertiſement. But though Mr. Elwes was now no longer a member of the Houſe of Commons, yet, not with the venal herd of expectant placemen and penſioners, whoſe eye too often views the Houſe of Commons as another Royal Exchange, did Mr. Elwes retire into private life. No: he had fairly and honourably, attentively and long, done his duty there, and he had ſo done it without "fee or reward." In all his parliamentary life he never aſked or received a ſingle favour; and he never gave a vote, but he could ſolemnly have laid his hand upon his breaſt, and ſaid, "*So help me God! I believe I am doing what is for the beſt!*"

Thus, duly honoured, ſhall the memory of a good man go to his grave: for while it may be the painful duty of the biographer to preſent to the public the pitiable follies which may deform a character, but which muſt be given to render perfect the reſemblance—on thoſe beauties which riſe from the bad parts of the picture, who ſhall ſay, it is not a duty to expatiate?

The *model* which Mr. Elwes left to future members may, perhaps, be looked on rather as a work to

wonder at, than to follow, even under the moſt virtuous of adminiſtrations.

Mr. Elwes came into parliament *without expence*, and he performed his duty as a member would have done in the *pure* days of our conſtitution. What he had not bought, he never attempted to ſell—and he went forward in that ſtraight and direct path, which can alone ſatisfy a reflecting and good mind.

In one word, Mr. Elwes, as a public man, voted and acted in the Houſe of Commons as a man would do, who felt there were people to *live after him*;—who, wiſhed to deliver *unmortgaged* to his children, the *public eſtate of government*; and who felt, that if he ſuffered himſelf to become a *penſioner* on it, he thus far embarraſſed his poſterity, and injured the *inheritance*.

Some years after his retirement, mentioning his opinions of Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, he ſaid, "When I *ſtarted* in parliament, Mr. Pitt had not come into public life: but I am convinced he is the *miniſter* for the *property* of the country. In all he ſays, there is *pounds*, *ſhillings*, and *pence!*"

Mr. Elwes was once much pleaſed with a remark made by Sir Joſeph Mawbey, who, with Sir George Saville, were talking on that *notorious act* of union betwixt Lord North and Mr. Fox. Sir George confeſſed frankly, it was *expedient*; for the friends of Lord North were ſo numerous, that Mr. Fox and his party could not go on without them. "Very true," replied Sir Joſeph Mawbey, "that may be; but there is a difference betwixt *getting in* and *ſtaying in*:—to preſerve your place, you muſt preſerve your character."

The propriety of the obſervation was fully juſtified by the event—for Mr. Fox has been politically ruined by the deed: and Lord North ſaved nothing by it—but an *impeachment*.

The

The probability that the abilities of Mr. Pitt would contribute to reſcue this country from the odium which had attended it under Lord North and Mr. Fox, turned out Mr. Hartley, as well as Mr. Elwes, from the repreſentation of Berkſhire. Mr. Hartley reſigned his hopes, not without reluctance; and Mr. Elwes was terrified at once by the expence. His unfortunate parſimony was certainly the chief cauſe of his quitting parliament; for ſuch was the opinion his conſtituents entertained of his integrity, that a very ſmall expence would again have reſtored him to his ſeat.

Nearly at the ſame time that Mr. Elwes loſt his ſeat, he loſt *that famous ſervant* "of all work"—compared to whom, Scrub was indolence itſelf. He died, as he was following his maſter, upon a hard trotting horſe, into Berkſhire, and he died empty and poor; for his yearly wages were not above four pounds; and he had faſted the whole day on which he expired. The life of this extraordinary domeſtic, certainly verified a ſaying which Mr. Elwes often uſed, which was this—"If you keep *one ſervant*, your work is done; if you keep *two*, it is half done; but if you keep *three*, you may do it yourſelf." That there were very few kinds of work which this ſervant could not do, may be eſtimated by what he did: but that his knowledge of how ſome things were done, was not very extenſive, may be taken from the following circumſtance.

When the Lower Houſe carried up their addreſs to the King, on the ſubject of the American war, old Thomas (for that was the name of the fellow) who had never ſeen his maſter do any thing but ride on his moſt important occaſions, imagined he was to ride up to his Majeſty at St. James's, and ſpeak to him on horſeback. Accordingly he cleaned up the

the old ſaddles, gave the horſes a feed of corn at his own expence, and at his own expence too had a piece of *new ribband* in front, put upon one of the bridles; and all this that his maſter might do things handſomely, and like a "*parliament man!*" But when he found out how his maſter was to go; ſaw the carriage of Colonel Timms at the door, who, by borrowing for Mr. Elwes a bag-wig, lending him a ſhirt with laced ruffles, and new furbiſhing his *everlaſting coat*, had made him look very differently from what he uſually did, and in truth, much *like a gentleman*, old Thomas returning all his own zeal and finery back into the ſtables, obſerved, with regret, that "mayhap, his maſter might look a *bit* of a *gentleman*—but he was ſo altered, nobody would know him!"

Amongſt the ſmaller memorials of the parliamentary life of Mr. Elwes, may be noted, that he did not follow the cuſtom of members in general, by ſitting on any particular ſide of the houſe, but ſat, as occaſion preſented itſelf, on either, indiſcriminately—and he voted much in the ſame manner.

He never once roſe to *ſpeak*, or delivered his ſentiments further than by his vote; and in his attendance he was always early and late; he never left it for dinner, as he had accuſtomed himſelf to faſting, ſometimes for twenty-four hours in continuance.

No man ever retired from the Houſe of Commons, leaving it more loaded with obligations than he did; and they were obligations that were never cancelled. From the *multitude of bonds* ſince ſeen, it ſhould appear, that ſome members imagined he was a *great public money lender*, appointed by *government*, to come down into the Houſe of Commons, and "oblige the gentlemen" who might be in want of pecuniary aid.

When

When application was made for the payment of theſe bonds—*on moving that queſtion*, Mr. Elwes ſtood ſingle; not a member ſaid "*Aye!*" and Mr. Elwes died poſſeſſed of proofs moſt undeniable, that, ſomehow or other, every man *muſt pay* for coming into Parliament.

The temptation of *one per cent.* more than the funds, or landed property would give, was irreſiſtible with Mr. Elwes. But, amongſt the ſums he thus injudiciouſly veſted in other people's hands, ſome *ſtray*, *forlorn* inſtances of *feeling* may be remembered; of which the following is an inſtance. When his ſon was in the Guards, he was frequently in the habit of dining at the Officers' table there. The politeneſs of his manners rendered him generally agreeable, and in time he became acquainted with every officer in the corps; amongſt the reſt, with a gentleman of the name of Tempeſt, whoſe good humour was almoſt proverbial. A vacancy happening in a *majority*, it fell to this gentleman to purchaſe; but as money is not always to be got upon landed property *immediately*, it was imagined ſome officer would have been obliged to purchaſe over his head. Old Mr. Elwes hearing of the circumſtance, ſent him the money the next morning; without aſking any ſecurity: he had ſeen Captain Tempeſt, and liked his manners; and he never once afterwards talked to him about the payment of it. But on the death of Captain Tempeſt, which happened ſhortly after, the money was replaced.

This was an act of liberality in Mr. Elwes which ought to atone for many of his failings. But, behold the inequalities which ſo ſtrongly mark this human being!

Mr. Spurling, of Dynes Hall, a very active and intelligent magiſtrate for the county of Eſſex, was once requeſted by Mr. Elwes to accompany him to Newmarket.

Newmarket. It was a day in one of the ſpring meetings which was remarkably filled with races; and they were out from ſix in the morning till eight o'clock in the evening, before they again ſet out for home. Mr. Elwes, in the uſual way, would eat nothing; but Mr. Spurling was ſomewhat wiſer, and went down to Newmarket. When they began their journey home, the evening was grown very dark and cold, and Mr. Spurling rode on ſomewhat quicker; but on going through the turnpike by the *Devil's Ditch*, he heard Mr. Elwes calling to him with great eagerneſs. On returning before he had paid, Mr. Elwes ſaid—"Here! here! follow me! this is the beſt road!" In an inſtant he ſaw Mr. Elwes, as well as the night would permit, climbing his horſe up the precipice of the ditch. "Sir," ſaid Mr. Spurling, "I can never get up there." "No danger at all!" replied old Elwes; "but if your horſe be not ſafe, lead him!" At length with great difficulty, and with one of the horſes falling, they mounted the ditch, and then, with not leſs toil, got down on the other ſide. When they were ſafe landed on the plain, Mr. Spurling thanked Heaven for their eſcape. "Aye," ſaid old Elwes, "you mean from the *turnpike*." "Very right; never *pay* a *turnpike* if you can avoid it!" In proceeding on their journey, they came to a very narrow road; at which Mr. Elwes, notwithſtanding the cold, went as ſlowly as poſſible. On Mr. Spurling wiſhing to quicken their pace, old Elwes obſerved that he was letting his horſe feed on ſome hay that was hanging on the ſides of the hedge—"Beſides," added he, "it is nice hay, and you have it for *nothing!*"

Thus, while endangering his neck to ſave the payment of a turnpike, and ſtarving his horſe for a halfpenny-worth of *hay*, was he riſking the ſum of *twenty-five thouſand pounds* on ſome iron works acroſs

acroſs the Atlantic Ocean, and of which he knew nothing, either as to produce, proſpect, or ſituation.

When he retired from parliament, Mr. Elwes was nearly ſeventy-five years of age; and the expenditure of a few hundred pounds would certainly have continued him in the ſituation he loved; where he was reſpected, and had due honour; where he was amongſt his *friends*; and where long habit had made every thing congenial to him. All this he gave up to his love of *money**. That paſſion, which, conſuming all before it, as it hurried him along the few remaining years of his life, at length carried him to his grave twenty years ſooner than the muſcular vigour of his body might have given reaſon to expect; for when Doctor Wall, his laſt phyſician, was called in, and viewed him extended on that *ſqualid bed of poverty* from which he would not be relieved, he ſaid to one of his ſons, "Sir, your father might have lived theſe twenty years; but the irritations of his temper have made it impoſſible to hope for any thing; the body is yet ſtrong, but the mind is gone entirely!"

Mr. Elwes had, for ſome years, been a member of a card club at the Mount Coffee-houſe; and, by a conſtant attendance on this meeting, he, for a time, conſoled himſelf for the loſs of his parliamentary ſeat. The play was moderate, and he had an opportunity of meeting many of his old acquaintances in the Houſe of Commons; and he experienced a pleaſure, which, however trivial it may appear, was not leſs ſatisfactory—that of enjoying *fire* and *candle* at a general expence. For however rejectful Mr. Elwes

* This is a ſtriking proof, that the loſs of thoſe large ſums which he had lent his fenatorial friends, did not afflict him much; otherwiſe his recluſion from Parliament might as well be attributed to this cauſe, as the *laſt expenſive* one of ſoliciting the freeholders.

appeared

appeared of "the good things of this life," when they were to come out of his own pocket—he by no means acted in the ſame manner when thoſe things were at the expence of any other perſon. He had an admirable taſte in French diſhes, at the table of another—No man had more judgment in French wines, when they did not come from his own wine-merchant—and "he was very nice in his appetite," on the day he dined from home.

He ſtill retained ſome fondneſs for play, and imagined he had no ſmall ſkill at picquet. It was his ill luck, however, one day, to meet with a gentleman at the Mount Coffee-houſe, who thought the ſame, and on much better grounds; for after a conteſt of two days and a night, in which Mr. Elwes continued with perſeverance, he roſe the loſer of a ſum which he always endeavoured to conceal—though there is reaſon to think it was not leſs than *three thouſand pounds*. Some part of it was paid by a large draft on Meſſrs. Hoares, and was received very early the next morning. Thus while, by every art of human mortification, he was ſaving *ſhillings*, *ſixpences*, and even *pence*, he would kick down in one moment the heap he had raiſed.

At the cloſe of the ſpring of 1785, he wiſhed again to viſit, which he had not done for ſome years, his ſeat at Stoke. But then the journey was a moſt ſerious object: the famous old ſervant was dead; all the horſes that remained with him were a couple of worn-out brood mares; and he himſelf was not in that vigour of body, in which he could ride ſixty or ſeventy miles on the ſuſtenance of *two boiled eggs*. The mention of a poſt-chaiſe would have been a crime,—"*He* afford a *poſt-chaiſe*, indeed! where was *he* to get the money!" would have been his exclamation.

At length he was *carried* into the country, as he was *carried* into parliament—free of expence, by a gentleman

gentleman who was certainly *not quite ſo rich* as Mr. Elwes. When he reached his ſeat at Stoke—the ſeat of more active ſcenes, of ſomewhat *reſembling hoſpitality*, and where his fox-hounds had ſpread ſomewhat like vivacity around—he remarked, "he had expended a great deal of money once very fooliſhly; but that a man grew *wiſer* by time."

The rooms at his ſeat at Stoke, that were now much out of repair, and would have all fallen in, but for his ſon, John Elwes, Eſq. who had reſided there, he thought too expenſively furniſhed, as worſe things might have done. If a window was broken, there was to be no repair but that of a little brown paper, or that of piecing in a bit of broken glaſs, which had at length been done ſo frequently, and in ſo many ſhapes, that it would have puzzled a mathematician to ſay "what figure they deſcribed." To ſave fire, he would walk about the remains of an old greenhouſe, or ſit, with a ſervant, in the kitchen. During the harveſt, he would amuſe himſelf with going into the fields to glean the corn, on the grounds of *his own tenants*; and they uſed to leave a little more than common, to pleaſe the old gentleman, who was as eager after it as any pauper in the pariſh.

In the advance of the ſeaſon, his morning employment was to pick up any ſtray chips, bones, or other things, to carry to the fire, in his pocket—and he was one day ſurpriſed by a neighbouring gentleman in the act of pulling down, with ſome difficulty, a *crow's neſt*, for this purpoſe. On the gentleman wondering why he gave himſelf this trouble—"Oh Sir," replied he, "it is really a ſhame that theſe creatures ſhould do ſo. Do but ſee what waſte they make!"

His inſatiable deſire of ſaving was now become uniform and ſyſtematic; he ſtill rode about the country on one of theſe mares—but then he rode

her very œconomically; on the ſoft turf adjoining the road, without putting himſelf to the expence of ſhoes—as he obſerved, "The turf was ſo pleaſant to a horſe's foot!" And when any gentleman called to pay him a viſit, and the boy who attended in the ſtables was profuſe enough to put a little hay before his horſe, old Elwes would ſlily ſteal back into the ſtable, and take away the hay very carefully.

To ſave, as he thought, the expence of going to a butcher, he would have a whole ſheep killed, and ſo eat mutton to the—*end of the chapter*. When he occaſionally had his river drawn, though ſometimes horſe-loads of ſmall fiſh were taken, not one would he ſuffer to be thrown in again, for he obſerved, "He ſhould never ſee them more!" Game in the laſt ſtate of putrefaction, and meat that *walked about his plate*, would he continue to eat, rather than have new things killed before the old proviſion was exhauſted.

With this diet—the *charnel houſe of ſuſtenance*—his dreſs kept pace—equally in the laſt ſtage of *abſolute diſſolution*. Sometimes he would walk about in a tattered brown-coloured hat: and ſometimes in a red and white woollen cap.

When any friends, who might occaſionally be with him, were abſent, he would carefully put out his own fire, and walk to the houſe of a neighbour; and thus make one fire ſerve both. His ſhoes he never would ſuffer to be cleaned, leſt they ſhould be worn out the ſooner. But ſtill, with all this *ſelf-denial*—that penury of life to which the inhabitant of an *alms-houſe* is not doomed—ſtill did he think he was profuſe, and frequently ſay, "He muſt be a little more careful of his property." When he went to bed, he would put five or ten guineas into a bureau, and then, full of his money, after he had retired to reſt, and ſometimes in the middle of the night,

night, he would come down to ſee if it was ſafe. The irritation of his mind was unceaſing. He thought every body extravagant: and when a perſon was talking to him one day of the great wealth of old Mr. Jennings, (who is ſuppoſed to be worth a *million*) and that they had ſeen him that day in a new carriage—"Aye, aye," ſaid old Elwes, "he will ſoon ſee the *end* of his money!"

Amongſt traits ſo various, a *theatrical anecdote* may not be unamuſing. It was during this period of his being in the country, that he firſt became acquainted with Mrs. Wells. The gallantry peculiar to the manners of the old court, led him to be very attentive and very ceremonious to her: and to the laſt moment of his life, ſhe remembered the civilities which at times ſo diſtinguiſhed him, and paid him every attention to the lateſt day in which ſhe ſaw him.

As was natural, he would frequently talk to her about theatres; and ſhe as naturally made mention of thoſe preſent talents which adorn the drama of our day. She concluded he had ſeen Mrs. Siddons? No.—Mrs. Jordan? No.—Perhaps Mr. Kemble? No; none of them. It was probable then that he muſt have ſeen the ſtage of his own times—and remembered Mr. Garrick? No: he had never ſeen him. In ſhort, he had *never been at a theatre at all!*

But when Mr. Elwes returned again into Suffolk, and expoſed, to continued obſervation, all his penury—when his tenants ſaw in his appearance or ſtyle of living, every thing that was inferior to their own—when his neighbours, at beſt, could but ſmile at his infirmities—and his very ſervants grew aſhamed of the meanneſs of their maſter—all that approached reſpect formerly, was now gone.

And a gentleman, one day, enquiring which was the houſe of Mr. Elwes, was facetiouſly told, by one of the tenants—"the *poor-houſe* of the pariſh!"

Mr. Elwes now denied himſelf every thing, except the common neceſſaries of life: and indeed it might have admitted a doubt, whether or not, if his manors, his fiſh-ponds, and ſome grounds, in his own hands, had not furniſhed a ſubſiſtence, where he had not any thing *actually to buy*, he would not, rather than have *bought any thing*, have ſtarved. He, one day, during this period, dined upon the remaining part of a moor-hen, which had been brought out of the river by a *rat!* and at another, eat an undigeſted part of a pike, which the larger one had ſwallowed, but had not finiſhed, and which were taken in this ſtate in a net! At the time this laſt circumſtance happened, he diſcovered a ſtrange kind of ſatisfaction; for he ſaid to Captain Topham, who happened to be preſent—"aye! this is killing two birds with one ſtone!" Mr. Elwes at this time, was perhaps worth nearly *eight hundred thouſand pounds!* and, at this period, he had not made his will, of courſe, was not ſaving from any ſentiment of affection for any perſon.

As he had now veſted the enormous ſavings of his property in the funds, he felt no diminution of it.

Mr. Elwes paſſed the ſpring of 1786 alone, at his ſolitary houſe at Stoke; and, had it not been for ſome little daily ſcheme of avarice, would have paſſed it without one conſolatory moment. His temper began to give way apace: his thoughts unceaſingly ran upon *money! money! money!*—and he ſaw no one but whom he imagined was deceiving and defrauding him.

As, in the day, he would now allow himſelf no fire, he went to bed as ſoon as day cloſed, to ſave candle;

candle; and had began to deny himſelf even the pleaſure of ſleeping in *ſheets*. In ſhort, he had now nearly brought to a climax the moral of his whole life—*the perfect vanity of wealth!*

On removing from Stoke, he went to his farm-houſe at Thaydon Hall; a ſcene of more ruin and deſolation, if poſſible, than either of his houſes in Suffolk or Berkſhire. It ſtood alone, on the borders of Epping Foreſt; and an old man and woman, his tenants, were the only perſons with whom he could hold any converſe. Here he fell ill; and, as he would have no aſſiſtance, and had not even a ſervant, he lay, unattended and almoſt forgotten, for nearly a fortnight—indulging, even in *death*, that avarice which *malady* could not ſubdue. It was at this period he began to think of making his will—feeling, perhaps, that his ſons would not be entitled, by law, to any part of his property, ſhould he die inteſtate—and, on coming to London, he made his laſt will and teſtament, of which the following is an atteſted copy:

THE WILL OF THE LATE JOHN ELWES, ESQUIRE,

Extracted from the Regiſtry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

"*In the Name of GOD, Amen.*—I, JOHN ELWES, of Stoke, in the County of Suffolk, Eſquire, do make and declare this writing to be my laſt will and teſtament, in manner following: (that is to ſay) In the firſt place, I direct that all my juſt debts, funeral, and teſtamentary expences, be paid as ſoon as conveniently may be after my deceaſe. And I do give, deviſe, and bequeath, all and every my real eſtates, meſſuages or tenements, farms,

lands, tythes, and hereditaments, ſituate, ſtanding, lying, and being in the ſeveral pariſhes or places of Stoke, Thaydon, and Marcham, in the Counties of Suffolk, Eſſex, and Berks, with all and every the barns, ſtables, outhouſes, buildings, and appurtenances thereunto belonging; and all other my real eſtates whatſoever and whereſoever ſituate, ſtanding, lying, or being, with their and every of their rights, members and appurtenances; and alſo all and every my perſonal eſtate, goods, chattels and effects whatſoever, and of what nature, kind, or quality ſoever, or whereſoever the ſame may be, unto my ſon, George Elwes, now living and reſiding at my manſion-houſe at Marcham, in the County of Berks, and my ſon, John Elwes, late a Lieutenant in his Majeſty's Second Troop of Horſe Guards, and uſually reſiding at my manſion-houſe at Stoke, in the county of Suffolk, equally to be divided between them, ſhare and ſhare alike; to have and to hold all and every my ſaid real and perſonal eſtates whatſoever and whereſoever, with the rights, privileges, and appurtenances thereunto belonging or appertaining, unto them my ſaid ſons, George Elwes and John Elwes, and their heirs, executors, adminiſtrators, and aſſigns for evermore, equally to be divided between them as tenants in common. And I do hereby direct, that the executors of this my will, do and ſhall, as ſoon as conveniently may be after my death, pay all and every ſuch legacies or bequeſts as I may think fit to give to any perſon whomſoever, by any codicil, or paper writing in the nature of a codicil, or teſtamentary ſchedule, to be written or ſigned by me, whether the ſame ſhall or ſhall not be atteſted by any ſubſcribing witneſſes. And I do nominate, conſtitute, and appoint my ſaid ſons, George Elwes and John Elwes, executors of this my laſt will and teſtament; and hereby revoking all former wills by me at any time heretofore made, do

make

make and declare this writing only as and for my laſt will and teſtament. In witneſs whereof, I the ſaid John Elwes have to this writing, contained in two ſheets of paper, which I declare as and for my laſt will and teſtament, ſet my hand and ſeal, (that is to ſay) my hand to each of the ſaid ſheets, and my hand and ſeal to this laſt ſheet, and to the label by which they are affixed together, the ſixth day of Auguſt, one thouſand ſeven hundred and eighty-ſix.

JOHN ELWES."

"Signed, ſealed, publiſhed, and declared, by the ſaid John Elwes, as and for his laſt will and teſtament, in the preſence of us, who in his preſence, and in the preſence of each other, and at his requeſt, have ſubſcribed our names as witneſſes to the execution thereof.

FELIX BUCKLEY.
EDWARD TOPHAM.
THOMAS INGRAHAM."

"*November* 27, 1789.—On which day appeared perſonally George Elwes, of Marcham, in the County of Berks, Eſq. and John Elwes, of Stoke, in the County of Suffolk, Eſq. and made oath, that they are the ſons and executors named in the laſt will and teſtament of John Elwes, late of Stoke, in the County of Suffolk, but at Marcham, in the County of Berks, Eſq. deceaſed, who departed this life on the 26th inſtant.

"And theſe deponents further depoſe, that ſince the death of the ſaid deceaſed, they have carefully and diligently ſearched amongſt the ſaid deceaſed's papers of moment and concern, for a codicil or other teſtamentary paper, which might be made and executed by him the deceaſed, and referred to by him in his laſt will and teſtament hereunto annexed, and

and that they have not been able to find any paper writing whatever of a teſtamentary nature, ſave and except the ſaid laſt will and teſtament of the ſaid deceaſed, hereunto annexed as aforeſaid, bearing date the ſixth day of Auguſt, in the year of our Lord one thouſand ſeven hundred and eighty-ſix.

GEORGE ELWES.
JOHN ELWES."

"The ſame day, the ſaid George Elwes and John Elwes, Eſquires, were duly ſworn to the truth of this affidavit, before me,

GEORGE HARRIS, Surr. Pref.
JAMES HESELTINE, Not. Pub."

"Proved at London, the 27th of November, 1789, before the Worſhipful George Harris, Doctor of Laws and Surrogate, by the oaths of George Elwes and John Elwes, Eſquires, the ſons and executors, to whom adminiſtration was granted, having been firſt ſworn duly to adminiſter.

GEORGE GOSTLING,
JAMES TOWNLY,
ROBERT DODWELL, } Dep. Reg."

The property here diſpoſed of, may amount, perhaps, to *five hundred thouſand pounds*. The *entailed eſtates* fall to Mr. Timms, ſon of the late Richard Timms, Lieutenant Colonel of the Second Troop of Horſe Guards.

The ſons, named by Mr. Elwes in the will above, were his natural children, by Elizabeth Moren, formerly his houſekeeper at Marcham in Berkſhire.

Mr. Elwes, ſhortly after executing his will, gave, by letter of attorney, the power of managing and receiving,

receiving, and paying all his monies, into the hands of Mr. Ingraham, his lawyer, and his youngeſt ſon, John Elwes, Eſquire, who had been his chief agent for ſome time.

Nor was the act by any means improper. The *lapſes of his memory* had now become frequent and glaring. All recent occurrences he forgot entirely; and as he never committed any thing to writing, the confuſion he made was inexpreſſible. As an inſtance of this, the following anecdote may ſerve. He had one evening given a draft upon Meſſrs. Hoares, his bankers, for twenty pounds; and having taken it into his head, during the night, that he had over-drawn his account, his anxiety was unceaſing. He left his bed, and walking about his room with that *little feveriſh irritation* that always diſtinguiſhed him, waited with the utmoſt impatience till morning came, when, on going to his banker with an apology for the great liberty he had taken, he was aſſured there was no occaſion for his apology, as he happened to have in their hands, at that time, the ſmall ſum of *fourteen thouſand ſeven hundred pounds!*

However ſingular this act of forgetfulneſs may appear, it ſerves to mark, amidſt all his anxiety about money, that *extreme conſcientiouſneſs*, which was to the honour of his character. If accident placed him in debt to any perſon, even in the moſt trivial manner, he was never eaſy till it was paid; and it ſhould be noted, that never was he known on any occaſion to *fail in what he ſaid*. Of the punctuality of his *word*, he was ſo ſcrupulouſly tenacious, that no perſon ever requeſted better ſecurity; and he was ſo particular in every thing of promiſe, that in any appointment of meeting, or the hour of it, he exceeded even military exactneſs.

Mr.

Mr. Elwes paſſed the ſummer of 1788, at his houſe in Welbeck Street, London; without any other ſociety than that of two maid-ſervants, for he had now given up the expence of keeping any male domeſtic. His chief employment uſed to be that of getting up early in a morning to viſit ſome of his houſes in Marybone, which, during the ſummer, were repairing. As he was there generally at four o'clock in a morning, he was of courſe on the ſpot before the workmen; and he uſed contentedly to ſit down on the ſteps before the door, to ſcold them when they did come. The neighbours who uſed to ſee him appear thus regular every morning, and who concluded, from his apparel, he was one of the workmen, obſerved, "there never was ſo punctual a man as the *old carpenter*." During the whole morning he would continue to run up and down ſtairs, to ſee the men were not idle for an inſtant, with the ſame anxiety as if his whole happineſs in life had been centered in the finiſhing this houſe, regardleſs of the greater property he had at ſtake in various places, and for ever employed in the *minutiæ* only of affairs. Indeed ſuch was his anxiety about this houſe, the rent of which was not above fifty pounds a year, that it brought on a fever, which nearly coſt him his life.

In the muſcular and unencumbered frame of Mr. Elwes, there was every thing that promiſed extreme length of life: and he lived to above ſeventy years of age, without any *natural diſorder* attacking him: but as Lord Bacon has well obſerved, "the minds of ſome men are a lamp that is continually burning;" and ſuch was the mind of Mr. Elwes. Removed from thoſe occaſional public avocations which had once engaged his attention, *money* was now his only thought. He roſe upon

money

money—upon *money* he lay down to reſt; and as his capacity ſunk away from him by degrees, he dwindled from the real cares of his property, into the puerile concealment of a few guineas. This little ſtore he would carefully wrap up in various papers, and depoſiting them in different corners, would amuſe himſelf with running from one to the other, to ſee whether they were all ſafe. Then forgetting, perhaps, where he had concealed ſome of them, he would become as ſeriouſly afflicted as a man might be who had loſt all his property. Nor was *the day* alone thus ſpent—he would frequently riſe in the middle of the night, and be heard walking about different parts of the houſe, looking after what he had thus hidden and forgotten.

It was at this period, and at ſeventy-ſix years old, or upwards, that Mr. Elwes began to feel, for the firſt time, ſome bodily infirmities from age. He now experienced occaſional attacks from the gout; on which, with his uſual perſeverance, and with all his accuſtomed antipathy to *apothecaries*, and their *bills*, he would ſet out to walk as far and as faſt as he could. While he was engaged in this painful mode of cure, he frequently loſt himſelf in the ſtreets, the names of which he no longer remembered, and was as frequently brought home by ſome errand-boy, or ſtranger, of whom he had enquired his way. On theſe occaſions he would bow and thank them, at the door, with great civility; but he never indulged them with a ſight of the inſide of the houſe.

During the winter of 1789, the laſt winter Mr. Elwes was fated to ſee, his memory viſibly weakened every day; and from the unceaſing wiſh to ſave money, he now began to apprehend he ſhould die in want of it. Mr. Gibſon had been appointed his builder, in the room of Mr. Adam; and one day,

day, when this gentleman waited upon him, he ſaid, with apparent concern—"*Sir*, pray conſider in what a wretched ſtate I am; you ſee in what a good houſe I am living—and here are five guineas, which is all I have at preſent; and how I ſhall go on with ſuch a ſum of money, puzzles me to death—I dare ſay you thought I was rich; now you ſee how it is!"

In the ſpring of this year, Mr. George Elwes, his elder ſon, married a young lady, not leſs diſtinguiſhed for her engaging manners than for her beauty. She was a Miſs Alt, of Northamptonſhire, and is the god-daughter of Mr. Haſtings. She is indeed a lady of whom any father might be proud; but pride or even concern, in theſe matters, were not paſſions likely to affect Mr. Elwes, as a circumſtance which happened a few years before, in a caſe not diſſimilar, will prove:

Mr. George Elwes had, at that time, paid his addreſſes to a niece of Doctor Noel, of Oxford, who, of courſe, thought it proper to wait upon old Mr. Elwes, to apprize him of the circumſtance, and to aſk his conſent. Old Mr. Elwes had not the leaſt objection. Doctor Noel was very happy to hear it, as a marriage betwixt the young people might be productive of happineſs to both. Old Mr. Elwes had not the leaſt objection to any body marrying whatever. "This ready acquieſcence is ſo obliging!" ſaid the Doctor—"but, doubtleſs, you feel for the mutual wiſhes of the parties." "I dare ſay I do," replied the old gentleman. "Then, Sir," ſaid Doctor Noel, "you have no objection to an immediate union? you ſee I talk freely on the ſubject." Old Mr. Elwes had no objection to any thing. "Now then, Sir," obſerved Doctor Noel, "we have only one thing to ſettle; and you are ſo kind, there can be no difficulty about the matter;

as

as I ſhall behave liberally to my niece—What do you mean to give your ſon?"—"*Give!*" ſaid old Elwes, "ſure I did not ſay any thing about *giving*; but if you wiſh it ſo much, I will *give* my *conſent*."

The cloſe of Mr. Elwes's life was ſtill reſerved for one ſingularity more, and which will not be held leſs ſingular than all that has paſſed before it, when his diſpoſition and his advanced age are conſidered. He *gave away* his affections; he conceived *the tender paſſion!*—In plain terms, having been accuſtomed for ſome time to paſs his hours, from œconomy, with the two maid ſervants in the kitchen—one of them had the art to induce him to *fall in love* with her; and it is matter of doubt, had it not been diſcovered, whether ſhe would not have had the power over him to have made him marry her.

But good fortune, and the attention of his friends, ſaved him from this laſt act of madneſs—in which, perhaps, the pitiable infirmity of *nature*, weakened and worn down by age and perpetual anxiety, is in ſome meaſure to be called to account. At thoſe moments, when the cares of money left him ſomewhat of eaſe, he had no domeſtic ſcene of happineſs to which he could fly—and therefore felt with more ſenſibility, any act of kindneſs that might come from any quarter: and thus when his ſons were abſent, having no one near him whom *principle* made aſſiduous—thoſe who might be *intereſted*, too frequently gained his attention.

Mr. George Elwes having ſettled by this time at his ſeat at Marcham, in Berkſhire, he was naturally deſirous, that in the aſſiduities of his wife, his father might at length find a comfortable home. In London he was certainly moſt uncomfortable: but ſtill, with theſe temptations before and behind him, a journey, with any expence annexed to it, was in-

ſurmountable. This, however, was luckily obviated by an offer from Mr. Partis, a gentleman of the law, to take him to his ancient ſeat in Berkſhire, with his purſe perfectly whole—a circumſtance ſo pleaſing, that the general intelligence which renders this gentleman ſo entertaining, was not adequate to it in the opinion of Mr. Elwes. But there was one circumſtance ſtill very diſtreſſing—the old gentleman had now nearly worn out his laſt coat, and he would not buy a new one; his ſon, therefore, with a *pious fraud* that did him honour, contrived to get Mr. Partis to buy him a coat, and make him a preſent of it. Thus, formerly having had a good coat, then a bad one, and at laſt no coat at all—he was kind enough to accept one from a neighbour.

On the day before Mr. Elwes took his *gratuitous journey* into Berkſhire, he delivered to Mr. Partis that copy of his laſt will and teſtament, which he himſelf had kept, to be carried to Meſſrs. Hoares, his bankers.

Mr. Elwes carried with him into Berkſhire, *five guineas and an half, and half a crown.* Leſt the mention of this ſum may appear ſingular, it ſhould be ſaid, that, previous to his journey, he had carefully wrapped it up in various folds of paper, that no part of it might be loſt. On the arrival of the *old gentleman*, Mr. George Elwes and his wife, whoſe good temper might well be expected to charm away the irritations of avarice and age, did every thing they could to make the country a ſcene of quiet to him. But "he had that within" which baffled every effort of this kind. Of his heart it might be ſaid, "there was no peace in Iſrael." His mind, caſt away upon the vaſt and troubled ocean of his property, extending beyond the bounds of his calculation, returned to amuſe itſelf with fetching and

and carrying about a *few guineas*, which, in that ocean, was indeed a drop.

His very ſingular appetite Mr. Elwes retained till within a few days of his diſſolution, and walked on foot twelves miles but a fortnight before he died.

The firſt ſymptoms of more immediate decay, was his inability to enjoy his reſt at night. Frequently would he be heard at midnight as if ſtruggling with ſome one in his chamber, and crying out, "I will keep my money, I will; nobody ſhall rob me of my property!" On any one of the family going into his room, he would ſtart from this *fever of anxiety*, and, as if waking from a troubled dream, again hurry into bed, and ſeem unconſcious of what had happened.

At other times, when perfectly awake, he would walk to the ſpot where he had hidden his money, to ſee if it was ſafe. One night, while in his waking ſtate, he miſſed his treaſure—that great ſum of *five guineas and an half, and half a crown!* That great ſum, which at times ſolaced and diſtracted the laſt moments of a man, whoſe property, nearly reaching to a *million*, extended itſelf almoſt through *every county in England*.

The circumſtances of the loſs were theſe:—

Mr. Partis, who was then with him in Berkſhire, was waked one morning about two o'clock by the noiſe of a naked foot, ſeemingly walking about his bed-chamber with great caution. Somewhat alarmed at the circumſtance, he naturally aſked, "Who is there?" on which a perſon coming up towards the bed, ſaid with great civility—"Sir, my name is Elwes; I have been unfortunate enough to be robbed in this houſe, which I believe is mine, of all the money I have in the world—*of five guineas and an half, and half a crown!*"—"Dear Sir," replied Mr. Partis, "I hope you are miſtaken;

miſtaken; do not make yourſelf uneaſy."—"O! no, no!" rejoined the old gentleman; "it's all true: and really, Sir, with ſuch a ſum—I ſhould have liked to have ſeen the end of it."

This mighty ſum was found, a few days after, behind a window ſhutter.

In the autumn of 1789, his memory was gone entirely; his perception of things was decreaſing very rapidly; and as the mind became unſettled, guſts of the moſt violent paſſion uſurped the place of his former command of temper.

For ſix weeks previous to his death, he would go to reſt in his cloaths, as perfectly dreſſed as during the day. He was one morning found faſt aſleep betwixt the ſheets, his ſhoes on his feet, his ſtick in his hand, and an old torn hat upon his head.

Mr. Elwes on the 18th of November 1789, diſcovered ſigns of that utter and total weakneſs, which, carried him to his grave, in eight days. On the evening of the firſt day he was conveyed to bed—from which he roſe no more. His appetite was gone—he had but a faint recollection of any thing about him; and his laſt coherent words were addreſſed to his ſon, Mr. John Elwes, in hoping "he had left him what he wiſhed." On the morning of the 26th of November, he expired without a ſigh!

Thus died Mr. Elwes, the moſt perfect model of human penury, which has been preſented to the Public for a long ſeries of years.